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LIVING TEMPLES

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BY
BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

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INTRODUCTION

Is it foolish or idealistic to write a book of meditations for boys ? I think it to be neither the one nor the other, for after all to meditate is merely to think and to pray, and in our own time at least it would seem that boys can think a great deal and to good purpose, so as even to write stimulating and attractive books, and that they feel their very pathetic need of prayer. To the mind and experience of the writer of these meditations, it is a startling fact that in modern society the contemplative most frequently to be met is a boy.

BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

1026

TO
THE BOYS OF S. DOMINIC'S PARISH
AND MY FRIENDS ELSEWHERE

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LIVING TEMPLES

GENEROSITY

If I want really to cut down to its shortest form all that I mean by goodness or virtue or religion, I can do no better than call it generosity. That sounds simple enough, but I shall find that I shall need to remember no more than this at the start: Do I want to know whether I am good or not? Then don't let me bother my head by asking myself whether I say my prayers properly or go to Mass or am obedient to those set over me or keep from swearing; all I have got to do is to ask myself: "Am I generous?"

Now this doesn't mean that saying prayers and going to Mass and obedience and cleanness of language are things of little importance, but it does mean that if only I am generous I shall, of course, do all these things, for S. Paul suggests that it is quite possible for me to do all these things and yet if the love of God is absent from my heart to have failed. So that what I have to take care about is to start at the right end. The proper order is first generosity, then action—*i.e.*, not asking myself what I am doing, but what I am.

PEOPLE, therefore, who annoy me by telling me to *Be Good* really only mean to impress generosity on me. I have got to make myself see that it is the heart that first matters, not the actual things I do. It is possible that I am keeping all the commandments and yet failing because the motive of love is not behind my acts. But I can be sure of this, that if I am succeeding in my love then all these other things that I ought to be doing are really being done. My first principle to be remembered is to begin by being generous. That is the first point of all, the foundation on which the rest will be built. Generosity is the moving principle which alone can turn all my life into that wonderful thing God wants it to be.

FAITH

Now supposing I start with generosity as the principle most necessary for me to acquire in life, it will at once be evident that I must also have a very great deal of faith, for it is only in proportion to the amount of faith I've got that generosity will act. To be generous must often be very difficult, since it is hard to human nature to have to give up its own desires, its own convenience, its pleasures, ambitions and tastes, in order to make the lives of others easier and happier. Generosity,

if it is real, must make demands upon me, must carry with it in a greater or less degree (but always in some degree) a sense of sacrifice. That certainty I must see to be evident.

Now because it is a sacrifice, there must be some motive given me for doing it, a motive so compelling that I feel convinced of the need of self-surrender. In certain cases this motive may not be difficult to find. A mother sacrifices herself, stints herself for her child; a boy will sacrifice himself for his friends, a patriot for his country. That's simple enough. But my Christian ideal means more than this, for do not the heathens do that much? The really generous fellow will sacrifice himself for people who are not his friends at all, will be generous to his enemies, to folk so dull and uninteresting that they don't arouse in him even a feeling of enmity.

To do this I must have faith. I must have some motive, some vision of life that will inspire me with a sense of reverence even for the dullest of the people I meet; some appreciation of the high principles of conscience and the moral law which will enable me to live up to them at the cost frequently of my own convenience, it may be, of my own life. This, it is clear, can't be done without some sort of faith; for me this is the Catholic faith,

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for the faith that the Church gives me will let me see the whole of life transfigured and made splendid, and will show me the value of men and of principles as our Lord saw them to be when He thought them worth dying for.

CONFESSION

SUPPOSE I am trying to be generous, then I think I can take it for granted that I don't always succeed. There must be times when, thinking afterwards of the opportunities for acts of politeness and kindness which I have missed, I become conscious of my many failures. Nor will it be only in matters of mere politeness and kindness that I shall have failed to be generous, for every kind of sin is in one way or another sheer lack of generosity, and sin is evidently not a complete stranger to me. I do commit sin. Very well then, evidently I am selfish. That follows quite necessarily. Why? Because to sin is to choose what pleases me instead of what pleases God; and that again means that I think of myself instead of thinking of Another; and that in turn means a great want of generosity. To be generous evidently is going to be rather a difficult business for me.

YET on the other hand I do really want to be

generous, I want to know when I am failing, and I want also to know what to do when I have found myself to be failing. Here comes in the confessional. That will show me where I fail and show me what to do when I have discovered my failings. I get ready for my confession ; that will mean, among other things, that I go through my list of sins to be confessed. Now all these sins are acts or habits of selfishness. I can take each one and be sure that in each wrong-doing I was thinking of my miserable self—all of them are evidences of self-love, all selfish. Here then in my list of sins to be confessed is my catalogue of selfishness. Now what's to be done ? Well, the first thing is to be sorry for them. That will be something, it will be the beginning of generosity. Once I am really sorry I shall have begun to think of Another, of God whom I have offended and disobeyed, for sorrow leads on to love, and love is the turning of the soul away from itself in order to centre its affections on Another.

Confession, therefore, shows me my sins and tells me what to do, namely, to be sorry and to promise amendment. Moreover, the thought of our Lord crucified, of His Wounds and death, will take me along to the finest example of generosity ; by contrast with Him I shall be properly able to measure my meanness

and see myself a cad. Confession for me must be regularly and properly done so as to help one to be generous. It doesn't matter whether I always go to the same priest, but it is often a great help and I generally should choose the same priest if he is someone to whom I can talk easily and who will brace me up to be generous. In any case, the confessional prevents me from being sentimental and foolish. It makes me manly and generous.

COMMUNION

WELL, then, after I have in the confessional discovered to myself my own selfishness and have been made sorry by the sight of it and have made up my mind to do better, that must not be the end of the matter, for I am surely conscious that I need some strength beyond my own to help me to reach that higher stage of generosity I am now to aim at. I see that I am selfish, I am sorry for it, I really want to become generous. Yes, but though " wanting to become generous " is a most excellent thing to start with, it won't by itself lead me very far, will it ? It is something to have realised my mistake ; but that's not everything, not the only thing to be done.

EVEN when I've gone further than that and

made up my mind to become generous, I am sure to be frightened by my own record of past failures, that is by the fact that as I have failed before it is pretty certain that I shall fail again. Hence it is that I stand in need of something or rather of somebody who will give me the strength to persevere and to overcome. Of course, I know exactly who this somebody is when I can get into touch with Him. That Somebody is our Lord and He is received in Holy Communion. When, then, I go to receive Him, I go, not because I'm good, but because I want to be made good ; I go because I feel my own weakness or because I know that if I continue trying to be generous, He will certainly help me.

This means that it is a very good thing to receive Holy Communion as often as I can ; whether that is to be every day or not depends on my circumstances, on my own desire, on my conscience, on the advice of the priest. But at least let me go frequently. I must not think I am a hypocrite if, in spite of frequent communion, I still find myself very selfish, for I am at least taking the trouble to make use of the very best means of overcoming my selfishness. So I am to ask our Lord in Holy Communion over and over again to help me to become generous, and to catch something of the wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice which

He showed so constantly on earth ; " Blessed Jesus, so full of generous love, make my heart manly and generous."

PRAYER

Do I find it hard to pray ? I wonder why. I don't find it hard to talk to my friends, to people I am really fond of ; and I say that I love God, so that I ought not to find it difficult to talk to Him. But perhaps that is just the whole cause of my difficulty that I don't attempt to talk with Him ; I only recite prayers or read prayers and never properly get on to the talking stage. What prayer should mean is just talking to God as I talk to any of my friends, telling Him about all the people and things that interest me, the friends I've made, the people I dislike, thanking him for those who are kind to me, asking Him to help me to treat as I should those I find unjust to me, asking Him also to give me light in my studies, especially in those which are hardest and most confusing to me, and to give me judgement in my games and courage not to funk in them.

If I can only be really myself in my prayers I shall find the time pass very quickly, and what is more important find that prayer is

helpful to me. My morning and night prayers should vary a good deal, not be always the same ; in the morning I have to thank Him for having brought me safely through the night and offer Him the day ahead ; and at night I must thank Him for the day and offer Him the night. This thanking has got to be really genuine, for the pleasures such as I have had, the nice people I've met, the places I've been to, the successes that have come to me. Then the disagreeable side of things in my life should enter into my thoughts. I've got to ask Him to help me bear them patiently or to change them if He will ; and my own failures I must ask Him to forgive. So, too, I must talk to Our Lady, to my patron Saints, to my Angel Guardian. Let me be as personal as I possibly can. That will make things ever so much easier for me.

All this will give me the proper view of life, for it will make God seem not so terribly aloof from me, but rather a friend indeed. I shall soon see that my Catholic Faith is something which enters into all I do, and in that way will supernaturalise all my life. Besides all this I shall naturally become much more humble, for I shall connect God very justly with all that happens to work out well ; His hand will be clearly present in the success of studies and games, and His strength be

behind my courage, and His love will be the link supplied to bind up all my friendship, and His care pilot all my adventures and His wisdom overrule all my folly. "Teach me how to pray."

MASS

Of course the best prayer ever made was the death of our Lord on Calvary, for it was the supreme offering of the Son of God to His Heavenly Father. As He said Himself, love could not go any further than that; He had reached love's very limits when He had stepped out beyond death. Still, as a matter of fact, He did go further when He actually instituted an unceasing Calvary by His rather pathetic command to the Apostles: "Do this in memory of me." Mass, then, is nothing else than a continuation (I must remember that word, not a repetition but a continuation) of Calvary on our altars in memory of our Lord.

What especially have I to remember about our Lord? Undoubtedly what I need most to remember is His unselfish death for me and for others. There's the perfect example on which I have so much need to keep my mind fixed. What's the use of my talking

about generosity, unless I can find some generous soul whose life I can imitate ? The mere set of principles that I can lay down of what ought to be done will be nothing compared with the carrying out of these principles. " One penn'orth of example is worth a pound of precept." Well, here I have the very finest example of all, the death of our Blessed Lord undertaken out of sheer love for the sake of myself and others who have not had much claim on His friendship nor any right to ask Him for this final expression of it.

Consequently, the more frequently I can go to Mass in the mornings the better for me. I don't suppose it will be always possible, and certainly it won't be always easy, but then, perhaps, it will be worth all the more to me if I have to give up a good deal for it. It is called the sacrifice of the Mass, because it was a sacrifice on His part. Am I such an ungrateful friend as to let all the sacrifice be on His side and none of it on mine ? It is a trouble to get up to go to Mass, especially when the weather is cold or wet, when I have a good deal of work to do or when a whole day of pleasure beckons to me ; it is so much more comfortable to be in bed, and it will never be difficult to discover many most excellent reasons for staying there. Yet, I think I

am not quite so mean as that suggests ; I've got some sense of gratitude, of honour, of love. I do realise that friendship has responsibilities and claims, and that by assisting at Mass I am showing my appreciation of His example and learning to copy it.

OBEDIENCE

THERE certainly are people who find obedience easy, and who are never chafed at all by being told they have " got to do " something or other. They are what we call docile, and by nature submit to being ordered about. Nor is this really any less to their credit, for some of these folk are manly and upright and by no means weak-willed. It is largely a matter of temperament. But there are others to whom obedience is a most difficult virtue, perhaps the most difficult of all virtues, for their first instinct is to long to do what is forbidden chiefly because it is forbidden. No sooner do they hear of a law than their whole desire is to break it. Now this also is a matter of temperament and not in itself a failing nor an accomplishment.

YET in any case, whatever my temperament may be, I have to practise obedience. It is

the one outstanding virtue of our Lord's life (" obedient even unto death "), to which he was perpetually appealing as the justification of all He said or did. " I am come to do the will of Him that sent Me." He is always referring to His Father's will. Now if our Blessed Lord was obedient, to obey can't really be a weak-willed virtue, can it ? He certainly had plenty of spirit and had a perfect hatred of any humbug and hypocrisy, so that I can be sure that there is nothing wrong at all with obedience in itself. Indeed, I am certain that I've got to be very strong-willed to be obedient. I know it takes a good deal of self-control to make me knuckle under.

Obedience, especially when I am much tempted to rebel, is the most vigorous of all the virtues. It will exhaust all my strength of character to hold myself in, and it will even at times make a demand on my physical energy. Often when I am charged with being disobedient, it is really because I am thoughtless. I never intended to disobey, only forgot. But when I am tempted to be truly disobedient, especially when no one is looking and when no one will probably find out, then I have got to be very much on my guard and ask for divine help by prayer. If I want very much to break out, let me disobey when there's a risk of my being caught and not when I have nothing to

lose. Make me, dear Master, obedient till life's end.

PURITY

HERE, if anywhere, is there a demand made on me to be generous, for if all sin is selfish, there can be none so utterly and degradingly selfish as sins against purity, since in impurity it is just my passions that I am trying to gratify. Now impurity can be, of course, of all kinds, in thought or word or deed, it can be by myself or it can be with others; it can, by the way in which it prevents due knowledge and due consent, be great or slight; to it can be added the further guilt of cruelty when it includes leading others who are perfectly innocent into evil of which they as yet are ignorant. But in each and every case it is merely blind selfishness.

STILL I have this to remember, that purity does not mean ignorance of the purposes of human life, of the processes whereby we come into the world, of the depth and wonder of God's dealings in the sacrament of human love. The way of all these things I ought gradually to know, as I myself begin to feel anxious about them or mystified or am con-

scious within myself of feelings and movements I do not wholly understand. Consequently, when I find myself in this stage of normal human development, let me ask someone older, my father or mother, a priest, a good friend, a doctor, anyone from whom I can learn honourably what it is needful for me to know. It is better to learn it in this way from those I respect, than from lips which dishonour and make mock of what is sacred and God-designed. Learn it, I must ; for otherwise I may be ignorantly indulging in evil habits which don't appear to me at all in their real wickedness. Knowledge will save me where I might, through ignorance, so easily fail.

But in this matter of purity it is essential for me to be generous. As soon as I am aware of an evil thought, I must take my mind off it at once by thinking of anything that will distract me. Hence I must beware of idle moments, I must beware of indulging myself with too much ease, of laziness, of having nothing to take up my attention. Here, indeed, in some cases and for some people comes the evil of smoking, since by the sense of indolence it produces it encourages in them evil thoughts and evil desires. But in these matters no guide other than myself is very possible. Anyway, it is always in the realm of thoughts that I must be prepared for attack.

If my thoughts are clean, the rest won't be difficult; if I allow myself to have bad thoughts, I am responsible for whatever follows from them by day or by night. Let me ask for God's light to judge well and truly, and then learning from Him take scrupulous care

EATING AND DRINKING

It is very often difficult at first to realise that certain sins have any connection with each other; or at least it does not always suggest itself in any way evident that one sin should lead on to another. - Yet it does gradually through life become obvious that just as the virtues are all linked up together, so really are the vices. Perhaps the reason why it is difficult to observe this at first is that really the whole philosophy of cause and effect, of the relation of one thing to another, is hardly perceptible in childhood. We never dreamed that things or commands had reasons behind them, but looked on all the details of life as separate, isolated, entirely unrelated.

Perhaps, therefore, it may come to me as a shock to be told that eating and drinking have any connection with sins of impurity, that

mere physical conditions produced by excess of food could actually make me more easily susceptible to evil ideas and, therefore, put me in graver danger of surrendering to them and could even, by sheer bodily pressure, conjure them up by day or by night. Yet, as perhaps by now experience must have shown me, this is certain. In the matter of drink it is perhaps most to be expected. But even in the matter of food the same evil may be encountered. People talk a great deal about excess in drink; but excess in food is very much more common and very nearly as bad in its results, for it must coarsen the mind and overload the body, and both these must in their turn produce a state of mind in which temptations against purity will easily suggest themselves, for over-eating must increase the animal side of a man's nature.

Of course excess in itself, apart from the evil thoughts resulting from it, is a sin against temperance; and in so far as that is concerned, drink is no worse than food, worse only in its more tragic results. Now I can be sure that I shall have temptations in matters of food, temptations to over-eat, to gorge myself, to stuff everything into me that my eyes fancy, really in the vivid phrase—"to make a regular beast of myself." To any boy who has healthy ideas and who is living a

healthy life, appetite probably is a devouring thing and digestion a voice of little sound, and in a growing boy perhaps grave sins of over-eating are impossible; yet there are times when I know I am going far beyond what decency allows. Even at least if I am aware of this and on my guard, that will be something gained.

KEENNESS

If there is one thing more than another that should deserve a school prize, that thing is keenness. If there is one thing more than another that makes a boy stand head and shoulders above his fellows, that thing is keenness. After all, the top boy of the school in Latin or in science or in history is not always the one who has worked hardest; for those who remain low down in their forms are, quite as often as not, just those whose efforts for plodding persistence are a by-word to boys and masters. Often these are far more steady than those who race ahead. So that it usually happens that the prizes go to those whose actual examination papers are of course the best, but often whose energy in school work is the least obvious thing about them. They are clever and have good memories, and

rely a good deal on these to carry them well ahead.

But that which is really far and away the most deserving of praise is keenness. It is the true sign of the presence of genuine life. Ask an employer who is on the look-out for someone to fill a place in his business, and he will tell you that above all things he desires keenness. After all, a boy who leaves school to take up work is not required to know very much. No business man ever wishes his young men to come to him having already learnt how to make a living, but only having already learnt how to live. The routine of office, the intricacies of commerce, the delicacy of engineering, the coups of journalism are things which experience alone can teach ; and experience itself can do little good, or at least only after much time, unless it is keenly noted, compared, built upon ; that is, experience is going to do good only to the mind that is keenly alive to profit by it.

But even apart from what is to come afterwards, actually at school keenness counts for most. In games there is little else that matters. A batsman or bowler is of consequence only when he is keen ; for the fielder, the footballer, the boxer, the swimmer and the diver, keenness is the first and last element

of success. Among his fellows that boy always will be respected who is keen in all he takes up, in his fights, his friendships, his defence of the genuine principles of life. Especially is this true of the Faith. I must be keen in my religion, not content just to wander along and do things, to say my prayers, attend Mass and the Sacraments, be truthful, clean-minded; but into these things I must put all the keenness I can, my energy, my vitality, my life.

ADVENTURE

If keenness is the basis of all good and joy in life, adventure is its perfect achievement. To be keen is to be alive, is to be interested in everything about us, to see quickly or at least as quickly as we can, to have our eyes open to observe, to be prepared for anything that may occur "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." Keenness makes its entrance into all our concerns, work, play, religion, and gives them a soul which knows no limit to its powers. It never rests, is never dulled, never fancies it has seen enough.

Now it is perfectly evident that such keenness must bear fruit. If a man is devoted

heart and soul to any pursuit, it can't well be dull for him. It may seem to us who merely watch him that his is a dreary business to be engaged in, but so long as he is keen on it, the business will never be dreary to him ; so we finally discover that once we have made up our minds to be keen on anything, we shall find it soon growing and deepening in its interest. Hence the antiquarian busied in his ruins or his parchments, the scholar endeavouring to understand the exact meaning of some unusual phrase of Greek or Latin, the mathematician working out in fullest detail to an *n*th degree some intricate binomial theorem, have their own moments of high pleasure that equal our delights in whatever most appeals to us. Pleasure is coincident with keenness ; and keenness is the mother of adventure.

Thus we have always to realise that adventures are only to be found by those who go out to seek them. There are people who complain that life is very dull, and that they have got nothing to do, but of course the reason is that they are waiting for others to come to entertain and amuse them, instead of going out to entertain others and themselves. No knight ever waited at home for the distressed damsel to hammer at his castle door ; he roamed the forests to seek whom he might relieve. Those

books of adventure that we loved in our childhood were really true ; they were meant to teach us in our boyhood, and later even in manhood, that all the really thrilling things of life will only happen to us when we throw ourselves energetically into our business and our play, into religion and into life. Let me ask the Mother of God to keep me keen and alive in all my pleasures and duties, and to show me the road that leads to the City of Adventure.

LANGUAGE

GENEROSITY, the basis of our virtue, has to be exhibited in thought, word and deed, and of these three in some ways word is the hardest to control, for at times our lips speak without our thoughts apparently having had time to deliberate. The habit of swearing is a very typical example. Very few people ever deliberately swear. At first, perhaps, we may, to express anger or impatience, deliberately have used words which seemed to us to be rather grown-up words and to be evidence to others that we have reached a manly stage. At first, therefore, there may have been some deliberation in our conscious choice of particular swear-words ; but the impulse at any

rate was quickly moving, and that soon fixed the actual expressions which came thenceforward perfectly naturally and unconsciously to our lips.

HERE, then, we have an instance of words which outrun thoughts, for most of us swear without thinking for a minute of what we are saying, of what the words used actually mean. Such sin as there is in this lies far more in the impatience or anger they display than in the blasphemous or unclean meaning of the expression. But there are other ways in which most definitely the sin lies in the actual words used, and that is especially true in the case of foul and dirty talk. In this case it is the things talked about which do the harm, for they conjure up evil pictures to my mind, and suggest evil actions to me. These are absolutely wrong in themselves, therefore, and are to be generously avoided. Let me be very much on my guard against these things.

I DARESAY I find it difficult not to laugh at some story told me which is really amusing, though I know it is unclean. Well, I can't help laughing, and that's all there is to be said about that, but I can help telling the story again to someone else ; that I can certainly help, and I can also make up my mind to discourage among my companions that type

of story. Now this will often require a good deal of generosity, for when I get with other boys who are talking in that "smutty" way, it is a great temptation to join in and tell other stories which I have heard, and in that way raise a laugh and show myself off as amusing as they; yet if I am generous to our Lord I shall see that to tell things of this kind is to be mean and to do what I know He does not like. Here is a Boy whom I say I am fond of, whom I love. Isn't it rather mean to repeat things I know He dislikes, and in that way to show I am not really His friend at all?

ANIMALS

HERE am I placed in the world as a human being, mid-way between the animals and the angels. To the angels I have got to be full of reverence, as they are the ministers or messengers of God. Now what have I got to be towards the animals? Well, exactly the same. I've got to have reverence also for the animals. Got to reverence animals? Why? Well, why have I got to reverence angels? Oh, because they are holy and sent by God to do His work. Well, then, it is pretty much the same with the animals. They may not, indeed, be holy, for holiness means having a

soul which knows and loves, and it is not at all clear that animals have souls in that sense ; but they certainly are sent by God to do His work here on earth.

THAT is one of the things that natural history will quickly show me ; for example, I shall see the bees flying from one blossom to another in search of honey, carrying on their legs the pollen-dust by which often the flowers are fertilised and the birth of the seed is prepared. So again, in quite another way, I find man (*i.e.* the human race) making use of the animals for his convenience, riding the horse or driving it or getting it to pull loads for him, training the dog to watch and hunt and to give him signals of the approach of evil, gathering the fowls about him for their eggs, and the sheep for their flesh and wool, and the cows for their milk and for food. I am using the animals, therefore, living on them or by them, so that I am sure God sent them here for me.

THEN, because God sent them for me (that is my justification for using them), I must also reverence them as God's. I may kill for my need, but may not merely butcher without purpose ; may tame them, but may not practise cruelty on them, not precisely because I owe them anything in themselves, but

because they are God's, lent to my use for all reasonable purposes. To me, indeed, is committed the awful power of using them for my betterment, or of abusing them to inflame my passions, and to satisfy the fierceness of my nature or to wreak on them the vengeance of my impatience. Let me remember always that they are God's own making.

TRUTH

THERE is nothing more manly than the habit of telling the truth, just because there is nothing more divine, for the nearer a man gets to the perfections of God the better man does he become; and God's highest perfection is His truth. "God can neither deceive nor be deceived." His highest title, the Church teaches, is that He is the Truth, and that is because truth is the basis of every virtue or goodness. Just so does our Lord speak of the Devil as the Father of Lies, for untruth is the basis and ground of all wickedness, since deceit is the weapon used by the Evil one in his attack on human nature. He trades on our ignorance and on our passions, which are precisely of value to him, in so far as they blind the reason and lure us into wrong-doing.

Now deceitfulness is quite clearly not a manly quality, for it shows a mean spirit in the person who practises it. It shows that he is afraid to meet the consequences of his acts and dares not acknowledge what he really believes or what he has actually done. Truth, on the other hand, has about it a certain sturdiness, because it shows us that the man who clings to it is not afraid. Fear dictates lying; courage proclaims the truth. The easily-formed habit of telling lies of excuse is due entirely to cowardice. I am afraid, so I lie. Probably I am not naturally a liar, but I am naturally timid, so that if I want to get the better of my way of lying, what I ought to do is to be less afraid of others, to be open and manly, to stand up to the world.

Or it may be that my lies are chiefly in the way of boasting. Well, that again is a want of true manliness, for the man who is always boasting of what he is and what he has done is merely a conceited fellow who has no real sense of sport, no understanding of that noble Christian humility which our Lord came to teach us, no perception of that modesty and quiet humbleness which make those who have done really great things shy of hearing themselves praised or their actions even alluded to. Let me be manly, let me be humble of

heart, and then I shall indeed be a child of God who is the truth.

INJUSTICE

THERE is nothing that a boy feels more keenly than injustice. He is by nature hostile to it. He can put up with severity, he can bear patiently a good deal of punishment, so long as he is convinced that those set over him treat him justly and allow neither favour nor affection to interfere with their treating others as he is treated. Once that is clear to him, then he will accept life's discomforts, its pains and penalties, with the most stoical courage ; but on the other hand, once let him find out favouritism, and he will have had the springs of joy poisoned for him and will become thenceforward an unhappy and chafing inmate of his school or home.

YET oddly enough, though a boy is very quick to discover injustice whenever it is practised by those over him, he is at times blind to it when it is practised by himself towards other boys. He is a firm upholder of justice when applied from above, but not nearly so firm an upholder of the justice meted out by boy to boy. Here let me think of the way in which

I treat other fellows. Do I ever hear them say to me : " That's not fair ? " Do I use my gifts justly or unjustly ? Do I use my strength simply to get what I want, in spite of other people having a better right to it than I, having waited longer than I, having in any way whatever a more just claim to it than I ? Bullying among boys is, of course, injustice, and should be as hateful to me as the action of a master would be who discriminates in a class to the advantage of his favourites.

Let me indeed be fearless in my attacks on injustice whenever found, fearless in my defence of those unjustly treated. God grant me never to be silent when I see injustice practised ! That is the true spirit of the old Christian knighthood or chivalry which felt itself compelled to rescue at whatever cost all in distress, all those oppressed, whoever in all the world were unjustly treated ; but I must not forget to ask myself whether I am not myself unjust to those who are my equals. Our Lord says of Himself that He came to fulfil all justice. Let me look to it and see how far in this I am His follower. At Confession let me examine myself, and at Communion ask strength to live my life in justice.

SUNDAYS can be often very dull! Indeed, to a good number of people they have always been connected with dullness, less, indeed, to Catholics than to others, for even though we are living in a Protestant country we have been sheltered from much of the gloom and fanaticism which are attached to that unhappy religion. But still it may sometimes happen even to me, a Catholic, to feel the oppression of the Sabbath Day. What ought I to think about it? What should it mean to me?

WELL, of course, first of all I have to remember that I saw the basis of all goodness to lie in generosity. If I want to be a saint, a good Catholic, I can only become such at the price of denying myself much, so that I must not wonder if I am asked to surrender some of my time to God. In the week I may be so busy in one way or another that I can't show God all the attention that I ought or that I want. Sunday, then, is put aside precisely as the day on which I shall have opportunity for rendering this homage to Him. This does not mean that religion is to be kept only for Sunday, but that Sunday is especially reserved so that I may have time more fully to express it. Thus it is that the Church bids me to go to Mass on Sunday as an absolute obligation.

After all, three-quarters of an hour once a week devoted directly to God is not really too much for any soul that believes in God at all. Then, of course, it is certainly good for me to attend High Mass and a sermon, at least as the regular thing, for so I learn more and more about my faith and how I ought to behave towards God and my fellows. Benediction, also, I should attend when I can. No doubt there are hot evenings in the summer when the lure of the outdoor world is almost irresistible ; and nights in the cold winter or in rainy weather when to go outside the door is a real act of sacrifice ; still I do say that I want to love God, don't I ?

It is, indeed, true that Sunday is my day of rest, of ease and leisure after a week of work. Let me get as much amusement and pleasure out of it as I can. God will never mind that. But at the same time I really have to remember what I owe Him in the way first of sheer obligation, and secondly of decent gratitude.

REVENGE

One of our Lord's precepts which is hardest for human nature to accept is His forbidding of revenge ; it is one of the hardest just

because revenge seems so very natural and instinctive to most natures. There are, of course, people who seem to have been born without any admixture of it, people who appear to be wonderfully forgiving whenever any wrong is done them, and who therefore perhaps seem to us to be rather too weak-willed and empty of feeling to be able to do much good in this world. Of course, if the absence of any spirit of revenge in them is due to mere weakness of will, then, indeed, there is no merit in their apparent meekness. Yet we cannot always be sure that it is due to weakness of character, for some of the strongest of men have never shown themselves in any revengeful acts.

THUS our Blessed Lord, through the story of the Passion, in His silence, in His refusal to call in the aid of His disciples or His Father's power, in His pathetic plea for the soldiers who were crucifying Him, showed a perfect example of one who had no vengeance in His heart, and in this His Saints—from S. Stephen the First Martyr, who prayed for those who were stoning him ("lay not this sin to their charge"), onwards—have tried and succeeded in their attempt to follow His leadership.

LET me therefore draw this conclusion, that revenge is no spirit of Christ; to try to get

even with those who have harmed me, to hit back whenever I am hit, to repay every injury, these are not the ways in which I "have so learnt Christ." But I have got to add to this another conclusion, namely, that in order to avoid revengeful feelings I require a good deal of strength of character. Any child without self-control behaves at once in a spirit of spite; it requires the discipline of school-training, of games, of manners, above all of the grace of God obtained by prayer and the Sacraments to give a boy sufficient manliness and generosity rather to hold himself severely under control after the model of Our Lord than to let himself go as his first natural instincts suggest. In other words, certainly I can be sure that in my case the absence of a spirit of revenge will be due not to weakness, but to strength.

GAMES

It is very evident that, from the large place that games fill in my time and in my interests, the manner in which I take part in them must be of considerable importance to my soul. Indeed, more easily than in any other way I can gauge the precise nature of my

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character by seeing how other boys judge of me in my games. This does not mean that I should ask myself whether they think me good at them or not, for that at the moment is of lesser interest, but rather I should consider what their verdict would be if they were told to pass judgement on the spirit in which I play my games. Would they think me selfish or unselfish, keen or slack, domineering or willing to give and take? It is the spirit in which I play rather than the result of my playing that matters.

Now it is clear that, apart from the actual good result to my health that comes from outdoor exercises and all games in general, and apart from the recreation given by them, etc., there are also other good qualities more directly affecting my moral life which games are intended to produce. Foremost, naturally, is the sense of self-control. In almost every game or sport, the boy who is a bad loser is already beaten. By a bad loser is meant one who, when falling behind his opponent, gives in and at once loses his temper, for to lose one's temper is to lose one's head, and to lose one's head is to lose the game. The other fellow at once sees I am flustered, and he can easily play upon the ragged edge of my nerves. I am delivered over into his hands.

PERHAPS almost as important as self-control is the sense of leadership which games develop. To be able to handle men will be my greatest asset when I am out in the full career of life; at school, in my games, I have chances of learning this by opportunities given me of dealing with other fellows. Of course, I have to be firm with them if they are under me, but no one is so objectionable as a boy who fusses or bosses or has favourites. Justice and a sense of equality and respect for every other boy have to be my guiding principles. Here, then, let me turn to Our Lord, whose character must have been so charming and delightful, and let me ask Him when I receive Him in Communion to make me a follower of Him especially in my games.

BAPTISM

THERE are really very few people who ever can tell you the day on which they were baptised. Try this to see if it is true. Ask people you meet whether they can tell you the exact date of their baptism, and unless they were baptised as converts late in life, they probably won't remember nor even have troubled to find it out. Now that is an odd

state of affairs, isn't it? We are Christians, who believe ourselves to have been born children of wrath and to have been transformed into children of light, at a particular time on a particular day. Had we died before that ceremony took place, we are assured by our faith that we should never have been able to enjoy the full and supernatural vision of God; a great day surely that on which we crossed the threshold of life and became children and heirs of God. Yet, though I keep my birthday as a great event, do I ever keep with thanksgiving my baptism anniversary?

Of course it is a small thing, the actual memory of a date, but it may possibly be a sign of the general forgetfulness which characterises my attitude to my baptism. I know, indeed, that it was a wonderful grace; what I have to remember is that this wonderful grace still acts. There is, in other words, the danger that I look upon baptism as having taken place once, a long while back, whereas I shall never properly understand the Sacrament unless I picture to myself baptism as having begun at a certain state and never having stopped its workings, for on the day on which I was taken to the font and washed in the saving waters, there were set going in my soul certain graces which go on producing their effects to the end.

I OUGHT, really, to consider baptism as the means whereby all that upset of my nature which original sin brought about in it can be set right. I am given opportunities now (by means of this as the passport to further Sacraments and graces, and as the establishment of the Holy Ghost in my soul) for putting things right in my soul. The actual ceremony of baptism, with its prayers, its giving to me of a white robe and a burning light, is meant to show all this. I ought to read the whole service to see what actually was said by the Church and on my behalf, and in that way learn to appreciate all it did and is still doing for me. " Receive this white garment and see thou carry it without stain before the judgement seat of Our Lord Jesus Christ that thou mayest have eternal life."

CONFIRMATION

THIS is another sacrament which few ever remember to celebrate, and yet which can be of the greatest help to me if I will only remember about it, for it means the coming of the Holy Ghost into my soul. That ought to be a pretty big event in my life, oughtn't it ? Of course it is true that in a perfectly accurate sense the Holy Spirit came to my

soul at Baptism and that, except when I have sinned, He has never left me. Yet in some way, which is indeed difficult to explain, He came to me more fully at Confirmation ; just as the Apostles were already alive with the Spirit of God before He came down upon them at Pentecost, and yet were somehow joined in a closer and more intimate union with Him after their Confirmation in that Upper Room.

Let me start off at any rate with this bit of knowledge : At the moment of my Confirmation, the Holy Ghost dwelt within me. Now, this alone gives me something to think about, for it makes it very clear that I ought to take a good deal of care of myself. I am a living temple of the Spirit of God. Very well then, I must be something rather sacred, which must at all hazard be kept innocent and clean. Says S. Paul, " He that shall violate the Temple of God, Him shall God destroy." Yes, that is perfectly intelligible. If really I am inhabited by the spirit of God, then whenever sin defiles me, it is really a true profanation of something dedicated to God. It would seem very wrong to turn a consecrated Church into a theatre or gambling place or place of sin ; it seems wicked when men deliberately, without excuse, batter down a Cathedral. Mustn't it be very much worse,

more wrong, more wicked, to defile by sin my body which has at Confirmation been hallowed as God's dwelling-place ?

Confirmation then places the Holy Ghost fully in my soul. Never to be repeated, for needing no repetition, but always through life still working, this sacrament shows me whither I am to turn in my temptations. The two hymns to the Holy Ghost, learnt by heart, will be useful to me to repeat slowly to myself, for they will show me that Hidden Pressence within me, the centre of my life, the source of all my grace, my support through all my weariness, the pledge to me of hope and faith's final accomplishment, the perfect vision of Love.

HOLY ORDERS

Of course, I know what this sacrament is for, it is to ordain priests and bishops and other ministers of the altar, and to give them the necessary powers required for the office they are to exercise. Again, like Baptism and Confirmation, it cannot be repeated, and that for the same reason as with them, namely, it has no need of any repetition, since once ordained the priest does not require to be ordained

again for each mass said or confession heard. That is all very clear ; the only point for me to consider is just this : Was I meant to take on myself that terrific vocation ? Have I a calling to the priesthood ?

First of all I know this, that if I have it is a very great honour and a very great and wholly undeserved grace of God. It is even a privilege for me, an honour, to serve Mass, or be allowed within the Sanctuary as acolyte or torch bearer or in the service of the incense or in the choir, for this means that I am allowed to be in familiar and close relationship with Our Lord. What, then, must it be to have the greater privilege of speaking the words of consecration and holding God in my hands, of repeating the form of absolution and working the miracle of a soul's conversion ? But lest I should become scrupulous on the point, I can be sure that if I have this honour of being called to the priesthood, it will be made so evident to me that I shall not be likely to mistake it. This vocation may indeed be a burden in the sense of the heavy responsibility which it brings with it, but none the less is it a very great honour indeed.

Well now, has that honour been offered me by God ? Can I tell whether I am meant to be a priest or not ? Can I tell for certain ?

Probably not. Can my Confessor tell for certain? No, he can't. Who has got to settle it? I have. Should I ask my Confessor's advice? Yes. And then? And then I ought to pray and ask my parents and friends for their guidance. But finally? Well, in the end, briefly and chiefly, I have got to ask myself two questions after prayer and advice have been well attended to. (*a*) Do I feel I want to be a priest? Some things of it may frighten me, but do I on the whole want it? (*b*) Have I the capacities required? Am I educated enough, have I a strong enough power of work, can I be spared from the support of my family, am I sufficiently in good health? Supposing I do want to be a priest, and I think I have the capacity? Then let me ask a priest where I should apply. And if I don't want to be a priest? Then, for God's dear sake, let me just do His Blessed Will and be about that business to which He does call me.

PROFESSION OR BUSINESS

God is wise. Now a wise person speaks and acts for some purpose, and not just idly for no reason whatever. If therefore God does or says anything, we may be perfectly sure

that He has a reason for so doing, even though we may have to admit that we haven't a notion what that reason is. Consequently, it must be quite correct for me to say that when God created me He had in mind some purpose He wanted me to fulfil. It may seem rather difficult for me to see what that purpose was, but it must have been there, and it is of final importance for me to discover it. In other words, I have got to find out what God had called me to do in the world.

How is this to be done? Let me do a little thinking, and see whether I can't puzzle it out for myself. If God wants me to do a work for Him, He will certainly give me the graces of nature and of supernature which are needed to accomplish that work. If He wants me to become a singer, He will give me a voice and a love for music; if He wants me to become an engineer, He will give me a love of wheels and mechanical toys, and a certain deftness with my fingers; if He wants me to become a soldier, He will give me a love for that sort of life, or if to become a sailor then He will instil into me the charm and fascination of the sea. For whatever work God has prepared me, He has already previously fitted me. Here, then, is my chance of seeing what I am made for; I have but to argue backwards from my gifts to my purpose.

God wants me to do a work ; then He must have given me the gifts necessary to do it. I have got, then, to look at my gifts and judge from them what it is He wants me to do. From God's side my purpose comes first, then the gifts necessary to carry that purpose into effect ; for me it is first the gifts which I have got to count up in myself, then the purpose which I have to guess at as best attained through these gifts. None of these, as far as I can help, must be allowed to be idle, so that my profession or business will be that walk in life open to me in which my best gifts will be most fully displayed. My choice made, I can be sure that whatever my business is, whether the Army or the Law, the sea, the office, the Stage, Art, it is a divine vocation or calling which I must worthily follow out.

STUDY

For some people study is a very great nuisance ; for others, whatever they may pretend, it is on the whole rather interesting ; for others, it is the supreme fascination of life —but for all it is the only means of being able to fulfil properly the work God wants us to do. This may seem a hard saying, but it will be clear that in study is included a very

great deal, for otherwise it would be difficult to see how a field labourer could need study in order to fulfil his divine vocation. Let us start anyway by taking study in the ordinary sense of the word as it is understood at school. Now, what has got to be a boy's attitude to study? And if he has to study, what's the reason?

WELL, first of all, a boy has got to study, because the purpose of study is to train and sharpen his power of thinking. The very hardness of it, the dullness, comes from the fact that thinking is hard work; and most of us are rather lazy and have got nearly always to force ourselves if we want to do something that comes hard to us. Some boys find one class subject hard and some another; some don't seem to discover hardness in any subject. Yet, unconsciously all the while, be the subject hard or not, I am slowly training myself to think. It would be easier if the fellow who liked mathematics was kept only at them, and the one who liked science or literature or drawing or languages or history kept within the limits of his choice, but this system of education would produce a very one-sided and therefore narrow-minded boy. Consequently, I can argue to myself, a boy has got to be keen over his work (whether he's good at it or not doesn't really matter in the least) just

because by study he is training and testing and widening out his highest faculty, viz. his brain and memory.

But especially has a boy got to study the special business of his future profession. A medical or legal student, who fritters away his time at College or the Varsity, will perhaps one day on that very account, by his ignorance, be endangering people's lives or their rights. A business man, an artist, an actor who fails because he idled, is marring God's work and God's purpose. Even a field labourer, who has found himself in that vocation, and who neglects his opportunities of learning to be a better labourer, does harm to the perfect plan of God. Consequently, I have never to stop learning or studying till I die, in order that I may more fully and perfectly do the work for which He has called me :

No end to learning.

DEATH

The end of all our purposes is death. That is the final limit set by God to our capacity for working out His plan. We work always

against time, for the night cometh when all our work must be done. The thought of death should therefore be a steadying thing; yet it affects people differently. Some people indeed do seem to think that since death must be always near they had better get through all the work they can; so they bustle about, fussing feverishly and hastening through task after task so as to get it done in time. The idea for them is, we must do a lot before we die. Other people take rather the other view, namely, that as they have got to die, they need not hurry. Death will come when it must; as for them, they will go very patiently about their business, doing each thing solidly and carefully, not heeding over much whether the matter be finished so long as the bit to be done to-day be well done and lasting.

Now there is also a double way in which the thought of death affects people spiritually. Some say they are terrified and miserable at the thought of it, and try to get as much as possible into life since there's so little time to get anything done. Tell such a man that he's got to die, and he will say: "Then let me have my fling while I can." For him, therefore, the thought of death doesn't lead him nearer to God at all. We can conclude, then, that the mere thought of death is as

likely to make people worse as to make them better. Thus, as a matter of fact, it is a common observation of historians that a terrible plague or disease or war menacing a nation, though it will make some people more thoughtful and sober, will make others more out of hand and irresponsible—anything to try to forget the morrow which they have no power to prevent.

Now, if I want to get any good out of the thought of death, I have got to go on with my life, quite naturally and quietly, getting out of it all the joy and fun I can, bearing patiently the sufferings and disappointments of it, using to the full all the faculties I've got in order to achieve God's purpose for them, and then leaving the rest of it to Him. It is true that death is always rather terrifying if I look at it as though it were a staring skeleton ; it is gentle if I look on it as a loving angel of God sent to fetch me when my time is up. The prayer of my babyhood is true :

> Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look on me a little child ;
> Pity mine and pity me,
> And suffer me to come to Thee.

It can only be because I am lonely that I begin to feel at all that the world or school or home has become desolate and empty for me. There are such times, more frequent in some folk's lives than in others, in which a chap becomes very much discouraged because he happens to find himself set aside, or thinks he is, by someone whose presence means a good deal of happiness to him. A boy feels ill-used partly because he imagines he is less liked than others, and partly because he thinks he is misunderstood. Now it is, indeed, a sad thing to be misunderstood, but there is a danger lest we should suppose it to be a rather fine thing also, for it is possible to meet with people who really do pride themselves on being misunderstood. That is the foolishness of a period in boyhood which comes to nearly every one, whether for long or short.

This loneliness may be due, indeed, to the fault of other people. At home, my parents may not seem to realise that I am growing up, and may treat me as though I was still a child; or I may think that I have very little affection shown me, that I am starved of it. Or perhaps it is at school when I have lost a close friendship, that this sense of desolation

sweeps over me. The novels I read may help to add to this sense by describing it so powerfully and so nobly, till my very loneliness takes on a new aspect and gives dignity to my character. Don't let me give way to this nonsense, the pettiness of self-pity. Let me be a man.

LONELINESS can only be conquered by generosity ; only by putting aside my moods and my feelings and by throwing myself heart and soul into the lives of other fellows, by seeking for means of helping them, by going out of my way and putting aside my own convenience in order to be of help to them. I shan't get out of my misery by nursing it, but only by trying to sink it in work for others. There is, of course, also the great remedy of prayer, of the sacraments, of contemplating the sorrowful passion of Our Lord, of saying the first sorrowful mystery of the Rosary very slowly. Then, at home, I can talk to my mother and pour out my troubles to her. I shall find my mother and father (if I open out to them) a good deal wiser than I give them credit for, more understanding and sympathetic. Anyway, I must not give way to loneliness. I must be a man.

HELL

THIS is certainly the most frightening thought that my holy faith teaches me about a very unpleasant, a very terrible matter. Indeed, it is meant to be such ; it is meant to be frightening and terrible, and thus to become a help to me in my attempts to keep straight. But, first of all, I must see what is meant by Hell before I can go on to see why it exists, or lastly what effect its existence should have on me. By Hell, then, is meant principally the state of those souls who die in mortal sin (that is, souls who die deliberately hating God), and who thereby lose God for eternity. It is chiefly and essentially the loss of God for ever. There are, indeed, other punishments as well, for Our Lord uses the word *fire* to describe the pain of sense (and the Church safely uses the same word), but the real and most terrible suffering of Hell is that of being deprived of God, knowing at last in the other world all that God is and how much the soul needs Him.

NOW why should this prison-house of God exist at all ? Well, we can't altogether say why anything exists, for the simple reason that the existence of everything depends on God's will. He wants it to exist, and that is enough for me.

But there is this to be said, that Hell exists because good and evil are eternally distinct and opposed. If after a while those who hated God could come into the same vision of Him as those who loved Him, it would mean that good and evil were essentially the same, and that whether you practised one or the other ultimately the result would be the same. If God loves goodness, then those who die hating goodness and who go over into eternity (in which there is no possibility of change) can never be where God Himself is. So God's love builds Hell and man's hate lodges him there for ever.

What effect should the knowledge of this have on me? It should first make me remember that horrible place, so that the memory of it may come to strengthen my will when else I might be tempted beyond my power. God's grace will bring me the thought of Hell, so that the fear of it may frighten me away from my biggest temptations of all. But usually, indeed always, it is love not fear that should be my guiding motive. I believe in Hell, but I don't need to think much about it, for I shall find that since God has been so good to me, and has deigned to create me and to redeem me by dying for me, I have all the best and highest and dearest motives for trying to follow Him without having to call up the

memory of Hell, except under stress of the bitterest temptations.

SIN

SIN is one of those ugly things I hear a good deal about, for which I am scolded and threatened; but what is it? Well, quite shortly, it is meanness, littleness, selfishness. How is that? Sin means disobeying God's law by thought, word, deed, or omission; and when I think of all that God has done for me, it must be very clear that only selfishness could make me refuse to try to do what He asks. It is true that He asks a good deal, or, at any rate, that what He asks me to do or to give up is going to cost me a good deal, for to be a true follower of Him requires much generosity. Still, I have to remember this also, that He has been very generous in His turn He did die for me. There is no getting away from that; and once a person has died for me there is nothing I can decently refuse him.

SIN is selfish, then, just because it means preferring myself to God, and choosing to do what pleases me instead of what pleases Him. I don't, indeed, want to do things just because He has told me He does not like them; but

I do want to do them in spite of what He tells me, and my only excuse is the selfish excuse of a spoilt kid : " Oh, well, I want to." That horribly tiresome way spoilt children have of drawling and wailing out their excuses is more or less what my soul is doing when it sins. It is selfishly seeking to please itself whatever other people, whatever God may want.

Now the chief division of sins is into mortal and venial sins, which will be easier to understand by putting down before my mind what goes to make up a mortal sin. For a sin to be mortal, three things are required : (*a*) the matter, that is the thing done, must be really serious—thus the amount stolen (to cause a mortal sin) must be really big ; (*b*) there must be full knowledge at the time I am doing the wrong thing that it is gravely wrong, unless, of course, I deliberately, or through carelessness, am ignorant of this—i.e. I don't want to know whether it is grave or not ; (*c*) there must be full consent and not simply the sudden rush of feelings for which I am wholly and sincerely unprepared. If any of these three conditions is absent, then the sin is not mortal but venial. But whatever the sin has been, let me quickly be sorry, tell my sorrow to God, and, if it be mortal, add to sorrow confession as soon as possible and there receive absolution from it.

I HAVE thought about God a good deal and talked to Him also, but who is God? What is He like? Well, that is just the difficulty. It is so very difficult to explain what He *is* like, for He is a Spirit, wonderfully beautiful, wonderfully wise and perfect and powerful, but a Spirit, and therefore not coming within range of my eyes and hands. I can't measure Him or see Him as God, though, of course, I can possess myself of Him, for example, in Holy Communion; but even apart from Holy Communion I can hold Him, and that is of tremendous importance to me for very many reasons.

GOD is the Supreme Spirit, living His divine life in that wonderful union of Father and Son and Holy Ghost, knowing Himself and all His own beauties, and therefore loving Himself. Even without the world, before it was at all, God was fully active in His own knowledge and love; but He created the world and then, when the fullness of time was come, we came upon the scene, and now we have to realise our relationship to Him. He created the world and us. At once He had to hold up the world. He called it into existence, and He had to keep it in existence, else it would have slipped back into that blank nothingness out of which He

called it. He has to keep it going. Now that means, of course, that He has to guide it by His Divine Providence, that He has to support and guide all the lives of people and animals and plants and all the movements of the stars perpetually ; but further than that He enters even more closely into His creation by being present everywhere in it. He watches it, rules it, and is in it.

If I could only get that idea properly into my mind, everything would be much easier for me to bear. God is all powerful ; therefore, it is He who has allowed all my troubles and disappointments ; therefore I can surely accept them in the faith of what I know He must mean by sending them. God is all wise, therefore in all these troubles and joys is perfect wisdom. God is present everywhere ; therefore, wherever I am or whatever I do I can find Him. In a theatre, at a pantomime, while I pray, out in the sunshine, by the cool river-waters, in the lift and fall of the sea, among my lesson-books, at my studies, with my friends, when I am lonely or at home, awake or asleep, I shall know that He is by me ; I shall love Him and obey Him and hold myself without any fear before Him.

If Hell is God lost, Heaven is God found. Supposing I try all my life to realise that He is about me, that He is looking after me, that He is present wherever my footsteps turn, then I shall get into the frame of mind of always looking for Him. S. Paul, indeed, suggests that this attitude of always being on the look out for God is the really proper way a Christian has of becoming a true follower of Our Lord, and he let us know by accident that in those early days when the Apostles lived, the Christians meeting each other in the streets didn't say to one another *How do you do?* but just *The Lord is nigh*, which is nicer and much more important. Supposing, then, I am always trying to find God, in the jolly things of life, in the sad things, in other people, in death even when it comes, I shall be most pleased of all when I shall find Him and see Him as He is.

Now to find God and see Him as He is, is just Heaven. Here, indeed, we can find Him, but He is a hidden God, under veils of bread and wine, or in the faces of His friends or lurking in flowers and stars and birds. He is playing hide and seek with me; but at last I shall catch Him and come home. That is all that I mean by Heaven. It means at last finding

out what God is like, and knowing Him properly as He really is, and holding Him in my mind and seeing all His beauties and loving Him with the most intense feelings of rapture for ever. Heaven, then, is not a reward or prize that comes to me for being a good boy, in the sense of a book or money which is outside of me and given to me ; but a reward in the sense in which friendship or love can be called a reward when it comes to me from someone to whom I have been loyal and faithful.

That is why we are told that neither eye can see nor ear hear, nor heart nor mind conceive the joys of Heaven, for it is all the joys of friendship and love multiplied to infinity and intensified to such an extent that, unless God strengthened me by what is called the light of glory, I should break down and die under the flood of it. It is not as singing or praying that I have to think of it ; but just as loving and being loved without separation and for ever, " face to face."

OUR LORD

If generosity is all that we have been describing, it is clear that we can see it wholly and perfectly in Our Blessed Lord, for the most

wonderful thing about Him was the splendid unselfishness which marked every detail of His life. Even His coming on the earth can only be explained by that most generous of passions, love. The only motive that could have drawn Him to earth was love, for we had never a claim on Him to deserve redeeming, nor could we ever have even guessed the possibility of such a beautiful and touching sign of His friendship as the wonder of His Incarnation. Only His love can explain the reason of the Word being made Flesh and dwelling amongst us, so that right from the first Christmas of His life to its bitter end it is just one simple tale of kindnesses beyond number.

His boyhood is so attractive, because we know of it only as passed in subjection to His Mother and His foster-father, and because, bounded as it was by obedience, we can see that it must have been wonderfully unselfish. Our imagination shows Him to us as perpetually about His Father's business, which must have cost His human nature even then (as again later) much suffering. Those last three years of preaching and healing must have been preceded by years of love and generosity, else would His life have been no true and harmonious thing. There would have been a sharp division between what He did and what He said.

Of that later life of His, of which the Gospels are the record, incomplete, yet for all that clear and revealing, there can be no question of the dominant note of love which broke out into its fullest music at the close. Greater love than this no man hath than that He lay down His life for His friends. He claimed to be ruled by love and to have pushed love's expression to its furthest possibility ; nor has there ever been any to oppose or deny that claim. Here, then, is my perfect model. Am I uncertain as to what I should do, what I should sacrifice, how much I should surrender to others, I can have no better deciding rule than His example. What would He have done ? What actually did He do ? That's all I need to know. I shall lose by this ? Yes, humanly speaking, of course I shall, just as I believe that often, when acting like a gentleman, I shall lose more, humanly speaking, than if I behaved like a cad. I shall lose everything perhaps, life even, but not the fellowship of God.

OUR LADY

To be generous is to be gentlemanly ; and to be gentle is to follow the knightly rules laid down in the days of chivalry under the pro-

tection of the Mother of God. She was, indeed, regarded as a Queen by the children of the Church in those wonderful times of the Middle Ages, but a gentle Queen. Her statue, as we find it carved in those old Churches and Cathedrals, is nearly always crowned and full of majesty. Her painted image was perhaps at times over-gilded and too full of jewels, but always there is a tenderness, a gentleness, about her which show the side of her character that then made most appeal. Indeed, there is this wonder to be found in the Middle Ages, that with all their full story of battles and wars and tournaments, there was yet always among them a great reverence for women, and this reverence was most evidenced in the attitude of men in their devotion to the Mother of God.

She was in her life pathetically tender, dependent now on this one, now on another, watched over by S. Joseph, cared for by the "brethren" of Our Lord, following on the outskirts of the crowd to catch a glimpse of Him, standing on Calvary and handed over to S. John's care as though needing some other son when He had gone. That last phrase in which He parted from her shows how much He had looked after her, and how much without Him on earth He knew that she would feel the lack of care unless another took His place. The gentle, sweet silence which is

always about her, from the Annunciation to the taking down from the Cross, shows touchingly her tenderness, so it is not strange that in the earliest Christian painting of her she is feeding birds with crumbs of bread as though to show that her kindliness was remembered as the note of her by those who lived nearest to her time, and all the legends of the later ages show her under the title of compassionate, of the pitying heart. For the mediæval chivalry she was the truest type of gentle courtesy.

Now if I want really to be generous, I must begin by being gentle, which does not mean a milk-and-water sort of fellow, for such a character would be the last accusation anyone would bring against the mediæval Knights, though these also claimed to be gentle. " Gentle " is the most honoured quality that Froissart, their chronicler, can apply to the noblest of them. Now they claimed that in their desire to be gentle their devotion to Our Blessed Lady was their most powerful help, so that shows whither I, too, have got to turn. I must be very devout to her, pray to her, love her that she may make me also gentle and pure : " Turn thine eyes of mercy towards me, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

S. GEORGE

THE legend of S. George is familiar enough, the soldier-saint who fought the dragon in order to rescue the Princess from a terrible death. Our gold coins are stamped with a representation of his victory, and we have seen his banner of a red cross on a white ground hung from many mastheads and forming the centre of the Union Jack. Then there comes to our memory the story of the acts of his martyrdom, wherein he preferred death to dishonour, and rather than surrender his allegiance to Our Lord was eagerly willing to face whatever torments his persecutors might prepare.

BUT we may easily go astray in our understanding of his story, whether we take only what authentic details we can rescue from reliable historians or include also the romantic legend with its rescue and its dragon. Of course, he appeals to us as a fine soldier-saint; but the point to remember is that he is a saint, not because he overcame the dragon, but because he suffered martyrdom. It is not because he had success, but because he failed, though unflinchingly, that we honour his memory. We are far too apt to imagine him a splendid warrior who triumphed over great odds, instead of a rather beaten martyr who

would not give in. There is really a great difference between those two acts of his, the overcoming of the dragon and the being overcome by persecution. Of course, even in the persecution he was not really and truly overcome, but he conquered because he held on and triumphed on the other side of death ; but to those who watched, it seemed as though he had suffered the same fate as the dragon that he slew.

WHAT I have to get out of the character of S. George is this, that as one of his children I must turn to him as my patron and ask him to give me some of his power of persistence. It is really rather a difficult thing to hold on to my faith, to the practice of my religion, etc., and I shall only do so when I realise what a fine and Christlike thing it is. The wounded soldier, the dead soldier, is as great a hero as he who survives to ride triumphant through the streets of the capital city of his foe. Not success nor failure matters, but only by faith and hope and love to hold on.

S. ANDREW

THE love of S. Andrew's life was for the Cross. He had been brought up as an Apostle during

those three years of our Lord's public ministry, and his name appears now and then in the narrative, chiefly as a disciple of the Baptist, as Peter's brother and partner in the fishing-boat on the lake of Galilee, and as he who knew the boy whose bread and fishes were to be so wonderfully multiplied in the desert. But there is little in all this to give a very clear outline of the Saint, and it is not until we come to the acts of his martyrdom that we find ourselves in the presence of someone whose flaming soul stands out touchingly as one of the greatest mystics of the Church, a perfect lover whose only method of expressing his love came by the way of death.

LIKE the other Apostles, after Pentecost he went out to preach the Gospel, wandering chiefly in South-Eastern Europe and in Asia Minor, and everywhere turning the hearts of many to a love of Christ. Then he came at last to Patras of Achaia under a Pro-consul who forbade any further preaching, and who eventually shut up the Apostle in prison. But so dear had the old man grown to the multitude in the little town where he lay that they were anxious to rescue him from captivity. It was only at S. Andrew's earnest request that they left him alone to suffer and die. He was a real lover as his Master had been, and because he was a lover he could

find no rest till death made him one with his Love.

His torment was to be crucified on that cross-shaped wood that still bears his name, the saltire cross of white upon a blue ground that cuts aslant S. George's in the Union Jack. When he had seen this cross, he greeted it with much delight: "O Blessed Cross, taking honour from my Master's tortured limbs, long and ardently have I desired thee, all my days have I sought thee. Now, indeed, take me from among men and lift me up to my Master, that He may receive me from thy hands through whom He redeemed me." Two whole days he hung alive upon the Cross, preaching the love of Christ and the love of His Cross, then in perfect patience died. That has to be my lesson, a great love of the Cross. Not perhaps in death, but in life I shall find myself in many difficult undesired places, where God will let suffering come to me. May I have the grace generously to offer it for Him who generously offered all for me.

S. PATRICK

The character of S. Patrick that is most my need to watch and copy is his wonderful

apostolate among the Irish people. He had not martyrdom to suffer, but he had a great number of discouragements, for he tells us that seven times over he was sold into slavery. The people whom he went to convert had a religion of their own, a rather beautiful religion in its way, though it included in its ritual human sacrifice, but beautiful at least in this that it tried to make God's creation alive with His presence. The Druids, as we call them, were a rather mysterious set of teachers, but they had a great love of nature and of human beauty and strength.

To these people S. Patrick came as an apostle. Now that is enough for me to think of first, that he felt himself driven by his love of God to desire to bring other people to the wonderful knowledge of Christ Our Lord that he had. He so loved God that he wanted everyone else to share that love. We are always saying in our prayers : *Thy Kingdom come*, but it is possible that we are doing very little to bring that about ; yet we ought to be apostles, we ought to try to give other people the same wonderful faith that we have, for their lives we may be sure would be enormously helped by it if they had it.

Yes, but how am I to give that faith to them ? I should like to, indeed, but I don't fancy

they would listen to me if I tried to preach to them. No, probably they wouldn't, but the thing that will perhaps help me about S. Patrick will be to remember that he used the natural beauty of the world and of man to prove to the people the Blessed Trinity and the loveliness of Our Lord, that is, he tried to make the Druids see that what they already loved and worshipped was even more finely to be found in the Catholic faith. Now there's my apostolate. I see that other fellows respect manliness, straightforwardness, cleanness of thought and word and act, generosity. Well, then, I've got to show them that these are to be found in the Catholic Faith. That's my apostolate, not by word only, but as well, and far more, by life.

THE SEA

If I am to remember to be generous, one of the great helps in life is the power of being able to find reminders of God's presence everywhere. For human nature is so easily turned to selfishness if it be left to itself that it needs continual promptings, jogs to the memory, to make it conscious of what it ought to be. Such a continuous prompting is secured if we can train ourselves to the happy

habit of finding God in everything. Now one of these great reminders of God, one of the great teachers of generosity, is the sea. I have only got to meet sailors and read books about the sea to realise this. Of course, those that go down to the sea in ships have sometimes been a very cruel people, sea-going men have been terrible pirates, but on the whole history shows them to be kindly and simple and jolly and full of consideration for others.

THE reason of this is that they are all shut up together for days, weeks, months, in olden times for years, without perhaps exchanging words with anyone outside the ship. Now if people have to live like that, one on top of the other, it stands to reason that they will become perfectly miserable unless they make up their minds to be very unselfish. Other folk ashore who don't happen to get on with those they meet can just avoid them; on board ship no one can be avoided, for everyone comes across the other all day and every day. Consequently, sailors have to start by saying to themselves, "The only thing to do is to be unselfish and make an effort to get on with everybody."

AGAIN, just because they live so close to each other, they can't pretend anything. Everyone sees everyone else under all conditions,

and consequently there's no use posing, pretending to be different from what a man really is. The result is that those who live on the sea are nearly always simple and unaffected, and this is deepened by the courage and steadiness demanded of them, since their lives are perpetually at the risk of sudden danger or death. The sight of the sea, of a sailor, ought then to make me at once think of how that wonderful element of God has taught men who fare upon it to be unselfish, to be simple, and to be brave. These three things together end in making a man the jolliest of friends.

THE BODY

When I turn to the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, I am taught to find in the suffering there displayed the means for sanctifying all my pains. When I have headaches, when I am tired or thirsty or am bleeding from some wound or accident, I have, of course, to think of all He went through and try to find in His bearing of His passion the way of offering mine up to God in satisfaction for my sins, knowing, as I must, how truly I have deserved a great deal worse punishment than I ever get in life. His passion and death there-

fore take my pains and make them blessed things.

JUST in the same fashion as this should His resurrection sanctify all my joys. If my sufferings are made holy by His sufferings, my happiness is no less made blessed by His joys. The pains of my body, as well as of my soul, can thus be sanctified, and the delights of my body, as well as of my soul, thus turned to good account. These two ideas fit in perfectly together. Now the logical conclusion to be drawn from them is that all the real jolly things of life can become helps to my love of God and can make me dearer to Him. Thus the effect of the sunshine and the sense of happiness which the sunshine brings are just pleasant joyousness, God-given, for which I must be thankful. So, again, the cold which makes me move quickly and gives me a tingling feeling when I run, the warmth of the fire glowing through me, the fragrant scent of earth in springtime, the heat of summer and the laziness it carries, the delicious dip into the refreshing water, the fine and wholesome feeling of life after a good sporting game, the laughter of jests and plays and amusements, are all made blessed by the risen joys of Easter.

THIS shows me how good a thing my body

can be. I'm human, and therefore body and soul must help alike to my salvation. If they happen in a particular matter to be opposed in their interests, the body must give way; but ordinarily, apart from these exceptional cases, the body will lead me to God. Of course, I must control and discipline it, as I control and discipline the soul; cleanness of heart will quicken the body as evilness of thought and act will dull and coarsen it. But the body itself is a blessed thing, God's own make, to be reverenced and loved.

MY PARENTS

THE idea of parenthood, of the mutual love through which I have been born into the world, ought always to be a matter of reverence and respect to me. I shall meet, perhaps have met, people who treat as an object of jest the sacred relationship of father and mother towards the child that comes from their love. But for me all those wonderful ways by which God causes the human race to continue and increase should be standing miracles of His wisdom and His kindliness, things so evidently good and simple that gratitude and reverence will become the instinctive acts of my soul in regard to them.

Especially will this deepen my respect and my love for my own parents. They were responsible under God for my coming into the world ; it is to their dutifulness and affection that I owe my being. They tended and looked after me when I was far too small and weakly to look after myself, when walking was impossible, when I could do nothing for myself and could not even express intelligently, could not know sufficiently clearly, what precisely I wanted. Wholly, in those earlier days, I was beholden to them. Since then, too, I have very much to be grateful for as regards my physical nourishment, my intellectual training and education, my moral guidance and formation, and my knowledge of the saving truths of faith. Gratitude, certainly, and love have therefore to be my dominant feelings towards them.

But love and gratitude express themselves in acts and should not be limited to the mere expression of thoughts and words. I show these by obedience. I must obey my parents in all that is not sin. This will at times perhaps prove irksome, but I have to recall to myself that it is their duty to correct and advise me ; that in childhood, so long as I profit by their support and live under their roof, I am obliged to be obedient ; that even afterwards, when I have become an indepen-

dent member of society, I am still bound to listen with respect to their advice even if I finally reject it. In childhood their authority, in manhood their influence, should hold me. In both alike I owe them reverence and love.

THE POOR

In one way or another people are sure to ask me to be interested in some charitable work, perhaps to help them in some club for boys or young men, or to give them money for some hard case which they can vouch for as really deserving. Even if other people don't do this, the poor themselves are sure to drift across my path and solicit my aid. Now what ought I to do? Well, the first thing to do before I look at the individual case at all, and before I even consider whether I am able to help, is to realise that it is a privilege to be of use to other fellows. It does not matter whether it is a question of money or time or influence or personal talents, whatever I am able to put at the service of others is certainly a gift of God bestowed on me precisely to be so used.

I begin then by realising that it is not I who am doing a favour by helping others but God

who is doing a favour by letting me share with Him the business of looking after humanity. Then I should follow this up by another thought, namely, that I have to treat all these people, the poor, the sick, beggars, with reverence. They were made by God and redeemed by God, and have therefore about them a divine air and workmanship. Consequently, I should remember His saying that whatever is done to the least of His brethren is done to Him. This, again, deepens my attitude of respect towards the poor, sick, unfortunate, since it is a divine privilege to share my goods with them, and since also those with whom I come in contact are themselves, however broken now, the handiwork of God.

My ideal then is to be always of such help to others as my means or time allow. Naturally, I must be content often to be taken in, for it is better to be generous than to have refused those really in want. But usually the best way of helping is not spending money but time, since the cost of time is really more to me. The work, for example, of Boys' Clubs, of Boys' Brigades, Scouts, of organising games and summer camps are all ways which require the sacrifice of time and convenience, but they are sure and devoted ways of being useful to my fellows, and therefore of being pleasurable to God. Perhaps my

priest will be glad of help, or if not he, then some institutions, Catholic or non-Catholic, will not be difficult to find which will be grateful for my services.

MY SCHOOL

My years at school will be the years to which afterwards I shall look back with most affection as the years at least in which I found most friendship and got nearest to feeling the freedom of life. Perhaps at the actual moment of my school life, it may not seem so to me, for there are times when all the routine of school life is bitterly irksome. Naturally there must be during these years of training the discipline which from time to time jerks me up and seems to fetter the finer freedom for which I long ; but what I have to realise is that this discipline is essential to me. The effects of its absence at least are distinctly noticeable in boys who have never been to school, and who, at home, waited on and given way to, emerge into early manhood conceited, selfish, and soft. Of course, it is possible to find these vices in boys who have been at school. But that is more rare.

What I can take as a principle is that the

whole of my time at school is meant as a training, a discipline, and I must expect therefore to find myself blocked in many of the things I should like to do. Discipline is the first note of all. The actual compulsion of studies, the monotony and drudgery of them or of one or other of them, the periodic examinations, the accuracy of detail demanded, the driving of memory to its furthest point of retention, even the apparent uselessness of much that I am expected to learn—all these things are intended to train and discipline me. Not less a source of discipline is my daily contact with the other boys and my relationship with them. To obey others, to hold one's own, to realise their different points of view, to find a place for them in all I do, to make allowances, to forgive, to love—these also take their part in the system of training.

SCHOOL-TIME is above all then to be looked upon as a time to learn, not languages so much as discipline. Whatever else gets into my brain, whatever amount of information is imparted, this counts as little compared with the training of my mind, making it refined and cultured, especially with the training of my character, giving it a self-control, a devotion to duty, an acceptance of the painful side of life as well as the pleasurable side, a spirit of fortitude, of grit, of endurance, a wide,

tolerant view of other folks' ideas which is not due to indifference but to intense appreciation of my own. Out of this is born a gratitude and a loyalty to my school, its masters, boys, traditions.

READING

WHAT ought I to read? Well, the simplest of all rules is to read just what most attracts me. I should never read a book merely because it is one of those which "ought to be read." It is better never to read against the grain. It is, indeed, often a very great help when people recommend books to me which are masterpieces of literature. I can learn from grown-up friends and masters what are the great classics of my own country or of other lands, for there is, fortunately, no dearth of these wonderful examples of human power or human tenderness or human art and life. But for that very reason, just because there is no dearth, it will be necessary for me to pick and choose which out of all these precious pieces of writing make most appeal to me. For it is a fact of human experience that man works at his best when he works willingly; and I shall get most benefit out of my reading when I am reading what I like.

This means, then, that I must follow and form my own taste. The rudimentary beginnings of taste are present in me; I have leanings to this side of literature or that; well, I have then to follow these chiefly by using the greater writers who deal with the particular line in which by nature I am interested. Thus a certain science, art, form of literature, history, etc., appeals to me. I should then ask someone whom I judge really to have a deep and wide knowledge of that particular subject to set down for me a list of the principal and noblest books written on it. These, in their turn, will give me references to other books and so the whole flood of literature widens out perpetually, stretching back to the fountain-head and forward to the daily published material. I shall find by this means that my reading ceases to be desultory and yet never becomes narrow.

But reading is a mere means to an end, namely, to the enjoyment of noble thoughts and to the inspiring of noble and practical actions. Hence I must be careful not to read too much, since over-reading clogs thought just as under-reading will starve it. I should pause to brood or moon whenever I come to a phrase that pleases, an idea that awakes me, an incident that amuses, thrills, instructs. In this way I shall lose none of my interest but

gain a deeper store of thoughts which, by my own ponderings, will gradually become part of my mental outfit. Digested by slow thought the noble ideas of others become the tissue of my mind. Not where an idea comes from, but what I do with it, most matters.

HOBBIES

A HOBBY sounds a ridiculous kind of thing, for the word is oddly made ; yet it is one of the wisest of occupations. S. Philip, who had a pretty shrewd understanding of youth and manhood, even said that one of the chiefest needs of a fellow was to know the true science of wasting time. We have got to waste time very much in life because we shall only grow stale if we try to keep our mind perpetually at the stretch in our own particular business or profession. The mind, above all the attention, needs to be relaxed, and this can be done most satisfactorily by means of a hobby. It takes us out of our usual routine, and yet at the same time does not weaken but develops the intelligence.

CERTAINLY idleness is the great curse of man, for it proves the finest opportunity for the devil's work. Our proverbs enforce this truth

and our experience backs up the proverbs. The mind once emptied of its professional business will wander round the whole cycle of creation seeking for some other object on which to whet its edge, for mind no less than nature "abhors a vacuum." It is in those moments of idleness, of leisure, that the mind turns to evil, because it just lets itself drift and holds on to that which it has least trouble in seizing. Left therefore to itself, the mind suddenly may easily awake to the presence of a set of unpleasant thoughts which in its saner and more vigorous moods it would never tolerate, but which under the relaxed tension of the end of a business-day it gradually absorbs.

THE great plan of strategy is therefore always to have something ready to occupy the mind. Probably the hobby chosen will be far removed from my ordinary life and its profession. It may lie in the domain of art, of history, of antiquarian pursuits, mechanics, carpentry, gardening, games, music, the study of nature, the stars, work among other people less fortunate than myself; in any case, whatever it is, I shall be able to turn instantly to it as an attractive subject, of sufficient interest in itself to my mind to afford it at once a subject on which to centre and with which to be occupied. Now this hobby, therefore,

should already unconsciously be forming in my mind. What shall it be? What have I got at present as my chiefest interest?

COLLECTING

THE form that a hobby takes chiefly at school is collecting things, for this is indeed the natural scientific foundation of all knowledge. In philosophy there are two ways of arguing. I can lay down a general principle which most people will accept, and then begin to apply it to a particular case. Thus, I can make the statement that all men are mortal, and proceed to argue that therefore I must one day die myself. Or I can get hold of a number of examples of particular instances, and by my examination of them discover a general rule. Thus, by examining animals and birds and insects in their native haunts I discover that ordinarily the colour of their coat or plumage, etc., will correspond with the background against which they live, and is evidently a "protective colouring" to save them from being noticed either when they attack or when, otherwise, they would be attacked.

THE system of collecting is therefore the latter form of argument, for by gathering leaves

or flowers, butterflies, postage stamps, crests, postmarks, military badges, the names of railway engines, etc., I am gradually learning about them and become able to talk intelligently about them and to formulate for myself certain principles from my own observations. All this is just the beginning of an interest which will grow or lead me at least to some other thing which is going to prove the great hobby of my life.

Now there is one idealistic rule to be observed in all these things, and that is never to buy specimens for my collection, or at least not in any wholesale way. The joy of collecting is chiefly in the actual collecting, the hunting, pursuing, searching. To buy a stamp collection is a dull way of doing things; though to buy here and there a stamp or set of stamps will not spoil in any way the pleasure of the pursuit. I must track and watch my animals, birds, butterflies, moths, not buy them wholesale; watch my trains, not go into a shed to note rows on rows of them; trace here and there a crest or bit of china or whatever it is that I am after. In other words, it is the sport which is the real form of it, the real benefit to be got out of it, and not merely the actual possession. To have things may be the vulgar pleasure of the wealthy; to have collected them

means at any rate adventure and persistence and true knowledge.

FRIENDSHIPS

THESE are the joy of life, its salt, its support, and their ending is life's only real sorrow, though if death is the means of their ending even this is no real sorrow, for death is no true separator of friend and friend, since death is the only means whereby friendship between man and God or between man and man is finally accomplished and made absolute. The final authority on friendship is our Lord, whose life is itself friendship's greatest charter. He had His friends, His special friends, chosen out of His contemporaries, grouped round Him, and among them His inner circle, His particular special friends, even one above all, "*the* disciple whom Jesus loved." Along that glad path of goodly company all the saints have walked. Hardly one of all that vast host, ever since God's verdict on man was pronounced that it was not good for him to be alone, but had his friend or hers.

BOYHOOD is the especial time of friendship, since it is then that most of all we are able

to exchange one with another, our hopes, ambitions, what we have lost, what gained, where failed, where won through to success. There is truth in Kipling's remark that "the reserve of a boy is tenfold deeper than the reserve of a maid"; but friendship is just the breaking down of that reserve by the one soul or two whom we have discovered, who will bear our sorrows and help carry our griefs. Friendship's power for good or evil is based on that intimacy, that unburdening of all our secrets, that exchange of all our ideas and beliefs.

But friendship which, when loyally held by, can be so sacred, can also be easily profaned, and no more easily than in boyhood. Just because boys are so generous, so impulsive, so affectionate, they can also be passionate and sentimental, and sentimentality in a boy is a very dangerous thing, the opening of lock gates to an overpowering flood. The affection of a big boy for a small one can be saved from sentiment, from evil, only by a huge sense of humour and a frequentation of the sacraments. Even in my affection for those of my own age, I must have a realisation of the danger of being sentimental in my love, of being secretive, of being passionate and unhealthy, of stimulating powers which in their own good time are to find their proper

objects. Have I the wit to laugh at my own folly, to be open, to be clean, and to respect the souls and bodies of those I love?

SULKINESS

It is strange how sulky I can become at times. At ordinary times I can stand a good deal of chaff, I can watch others being preferred before me, I can, without jealousy, see my friends being taken into friendship by another and yet not jump to the conclusion that I have been thrown over. Then suddenly something happens, and all at once I get upset and show this by my sulkiness. It is one of the great sins of boyhood, one of the foolishnesses that come from a boy's sensitiveness, and from that perfectly true and loyal feeling for others and from that genuine hatred of all injustice which are yet boyhood's safeguard and defence.

Now at school sulkiness is easily looked after and corrected by the other boys, for they will either go on chaffing me when they see my sulkiness till I find the only way of escape is to pretend I've been pretending and so get out of an impossible situation, or else they will leave me alone and then I shall feel the

real horrors of school-life. None can long put up with a sulky fellow, and sulkiness is the final break-up of all friendships and, indeed, all acquaintance. No one for long can care for a fellow whose fits of melancholy and of sulkiness make his presence a wet blanket for the rest of the people he comes in contact with. He will be put up with perhaps at first, but gradually he will find himself more and more driven in upon himself, growing lonelier, and taking always a more bitter view of life and men.

But above all the mischief is worse when a boy becomes sulky at home. He is growing up, and the effect of that simple process is to make him extraordinarily sensitive. He thinks that his parents do not treat him with proper respect. They scold him and he mutters under his breath to himself, supposing (which may, indeed, be true) that he is misunderstood. Then they grow angry with his boorishness, as they judge it to be, for they find that every effort they make to please him, every entertainment to which they take him, seems only to deepen his gloom. Then they leave him and he becomes convinced that no one at all cares. This can be the worst state of all. Sulkiness, then, is a thing I must battle with, and my best weapons are prayer and laughter.

It is the surest test of character, to be put in command. To obey another is easier, for it is a matter of forcing one's self-control to the point of submission; but to command, and to command well, forces one's self-control to the point of directing and governing others. Perhaps, because of its difficulty and delicacy, it is the most fascinating position in the world, though at first the most frightening, yet its fascination is its greatest danger, for people who have once tasted power are loth to part with it. To let it go seems so much like a surrender. The chief cause of corruption in government, the chief cause of misgovernment, of misrule, of rebellion, of slackness, is the continued retention of power by men who have outgrown their faculty for command or who have never had it.

Its first effect on me, if ever I am put into a position of command, should be one of humility, for I should realise that whatever gifts I have are from God. He has given me whatever I have, and therefore His aid must be invoked in my high enterprise. I am put into command, I must hold my command, I must rely upon God. Now this humility will always in my difficulties drive me back upon

God, though it will lead me also to my fellows for advice. Some will be older, will have had more experience, so that what they say can be valued as a guidance; but it should not become a habit with me ever to lean too much upon one adviser. Favouritism is not more hateful in government than a weak dependence upon predecessors or advisers or superiors. Those who live under me will take with greater grace what I tell them as soon as they are persuaded that it is my own policy and not someone else's that I am carrying out. My will resting on God's should be the basis of all my ruling.

Then also I have to endeavour to get the best out of people under me by using them in their own way, letting them do what I want done in whatever way they like doing it, so long as they interfere with no one else, and so long as the thing entrusted to them gets done. Let me choose my subordinates and trust them to do their own work. "I have no captains under me," was Nelson's expression. "We are a band of brothers." It is that sense of Christian comradeship that should govern my relations to my equals and to those below me.

SALUTING

It is curious what odd little customs have sprung up in the human race which seem to us now so simple and natural that we can't conceive a time when they did not exist, yet presumably the habit of saluting people must have come into force through some definite agreement or order. Of course, the salutation of friends or acquaintances, taking off one's hat to a lady, are the common politeness of all Western races, but the actual military salute was presumably different in the old days of chivalry, the raising or lowering of spear or sword being the general method of recognition. Then, somehow, gradually the modern fashion of raising one's hand must have come into custom, either as a truncated effort to lift up one's weapon or an interrupted venture to raise one's hat.

The origin of the custom is, however, of no immediate interest. It is the custom itself which has to be considered from its moral standpoint. It is a correction of that half-false principle that all men are equal, which may easily ruin a true democracy. There is a clear and obvious sense in which man must be considered equal, such for example as the judgement the Church passes when side by

side men and women and children approach the sacrament of the altar. There no inequality can lie, other than God sees. But in every state or organised body, though there should be equality of opportunity for all, there cannot be equality of position or equality in responsibility or in power. For the actual working of nations, armies, businesses, schools, there must be some set over others, some who command, some who obey.

Now, on the recognition of this principle rests the whole social fabric of my life. Not simply have I to say that the principle exists, but I have openly and personally to recognise the principle or else I shall be tempted to forget the principle itself. The sense of subordination to another is a sense which only a strong man can comfortably feel and display, for to the weak man it is either a retraint or else he misses the whole feeling of it. To obey loyally and to be willing to recognise this obedience requires a firm character secure in its self-control, while, also, to accept decently the salutes of another, demands a sense of humility and a readiness to distinguish in one's own person between what is shown to the office and the man.

LOYALTY

LOYALTY to one's country is a Christian virtue, based both on gratitude and on honour. I belong to a certain nation either by choice or by birth; by birth according to the will or conditions of my parents, by choice according to my own deliberate will when the opportunity or occasion served. Now in either case certain definite rights are secured to me, and I am also defended against certain inconveniences of others, and I have my material life made comfortable and my moral life free. All these things I receive as the member of a nation, and only in that precise status have I any claim to their free exercise. Clearly, then, I owe in return for these a real loyalty, a definitely expressed devotion to the nation that secures them to me, so as to repay what has been expended on me and on the ensuring of my safety and freedom from unwarranted influence.

BUT it is not merely as a sense of gratitude, made authentic by the approval of God, that loyalty comes to be recommended by the Church. It has behind it a further sense or sentiment by no means limited to calculated return for favours received. Let me put it this way: Every nation has besides its mechanical and material side another side which has

no less influence on its people. Not only does the State secure me from trouble and protect me from injustice, but it also produces in its citizens a spirit of its own, dependent on national characteristics, built up out of a past heritage of deeds and poems and legends, and influenced by geographical conditions. All these converge to create a national character which unconsciously becomes part of me, and which is of value precisely because it is one ideal of life in a world made up of several nations. National characteristics as distinct in each people have their justification in the fact that these characteristics are different and thereby complementary to each other. Loyalty does not mean "my country right or wrong." But it does mean that I throw myself heart and soul into every movement that makes for the betterment of my people; it may, indeed, mean at times a critical standpoint from which to view national diplomacy, so as to be ready to applaud or to denounce; it does mean that I am making every effort in my power to secure the greater glory and happiness and peace and spiritual advancement of that nation to which I have pledged myself. Hence there can be no limit other than faith and conscience to be set to loyalty, even though true loyalty may seem at times not to pay. It is far better to suffer through loyalty than to gain by disloyalty, though

loyalty may sometimes mean opposition to popular favour. This point may be noted in the oath that the Greek boy took when he reached manhood : " I will do battle for our altars and our homes, whether aided or unaided. I will leave our country not less but greater and nobler than she was entrusted to me. I will reverently obey the citizens who shall act as judges. I will obey the laws which have been ordained and which in time to come shall be ordained by the national will."

HONOUR

HONOUR is the basis of all Christian life ; it is the union in one word of all the virtues that Our Lord came to preach ; it is the establishment of a perfect code of moral law upheld simply by generosity. To be honourable requires an immense amount of faith, for it supposes an absolute acceptance of definite principles independently of the fact as to whether there happens to be any compulsion to enforce their observance. A man is honourable who holds to his word in spite of every inducement to break it with impunity. Indeed, impunity is a word that has no meaning for him at all. It neither adds to life's security nor subtracts from life's obligations.

HONOUR has, then, to be founded upon faith. But it is further upheld by hope. Naturally, men are pretty soon conscious of their own weakness and are quick to feel that their honour is not sufficiently strong to withhold them from evil doing. Much as they may desire to do the right thing, they sometimes find themselves in such straits of temptation that the observance of honour's obligations seems for the moment impossible. Well, honourable men move from faith to hope, and put their trust in God. It is difficult—indeed, to unassisted human nature impossible—to keep oneself clean or just or truthful under press of terrible temptation; yet here a man of honour learns to put his trust in God. It is faith that launches him out under the impulse of honour, and makes him see the huge issues at stake and prefer the invisible to the visible reward; but it is hope that sustains faith and honour and makes the soul hold on when all else seems just ready to break up and go down under. I will honourably stick my duty out, for God is with me.

ADDED to faith and hope in the continuance of honour is love. The codes of honour are sometimes fantastic, sometimes hypocritical; here love steps in to adjust the meaning of honour. It is love of God alone which will

approve what is allowed and disapprove of what is not permitted. It is love of God also which is the fine flame that sets honour's soul ablaze. God has trusted me, He has put me on my honour, He is patient, not interfering to judge me till the time comes for the harvest when good grain and tares can be duly separated. He is waiting patiently while it is open to me to dishonour Him in Holy Communion or elsewhere, for He knows that it is only by trusting human nature to its honour that He can get the best out of it. I am trusted then, put on my honour by Him. How am I responding to that trust?

WHISTLING

THE jolliest boy of all is the boy who never grumbles. He is the most attractive person alive, full of fun, eager for mischief, destructive perhaps in his odd vigorous way, yet for all that taking his punishment like a man, making no fuss over his disappointments or his capture, but taking it all as part of the game, part of the price one has to pay for having a good time of it. Just equally is the grumbling, grousing fellow the bugbear of everyone's existence. He's never content and never happy, and infects with miseries the

whole world about him. He knows no joy in life and seems particularly determined to see to it that no one else does either.

Now the only thing to do in life is to whistle, that relieves one's feelings a good deal—just a long-drawn clear whistle, a bit wavering in its movement, ending softly on a down note. It lets off steam, in a way, too, that doesn't depress but rather pleases. Such a whistle stands, indeed, for a Christian philosophy that what has to be has to be, and there's no way out of it. I can be sure of this, that if what happens to me is God's will, then it is going to be done whether I want it or not. There is not a bit of use protesting or making a fuss ; that won't make things any better, for God is more powerful than I and cannot be moved by my sulky grumbling. Nor should I accept these things in a sort of sullen spirit, growling at God, for that won't make them easier to bear, but will only serve to prove my hostility to God. What I have to do is to make my acts of love and tell God that I only want to do His Will. This means accepting all that life brings me just because therein I see the will of someone whom I love very much.

But this may seem very hard to me, very hard just to submit and fall into line with-

out a word. Well, if I want to do anything let me whistle. My employer slangs me, my master reproves me, my friend seems to distrust me or leave me to go with another ; the weather is just what I don't want it to be, and all that I had intended to do can't be done now ; I get out first ball or miss a catch or fail to score through someone's foolishness ; I am hauled off to do this or that when I want so eagerly to be about something else ; I have to bowl to another when I wanted to bat myself ; someone treads on my toe or bounces past me or spoils my patient work—then let me whistle as vigorously as I can, and one day perhaps it will dawn on me by the infinite grace of God that a whistle can sometimes be the highest form of prayer.

TIPS

THE great evil of many people is that the sense of bargaining is too deep in them. They can never consider any work or any business nor, indeed, any act even of politeness without speculating consciously or unconsciously what it will bring them in. Their acts are often kindly, they are willing to oblige, they will at times put themselves to considerable inconvenience for others, yet all

this is spoilt by a financial and calculating spirit. It isn't quite that they do these things in order to make profit, but that all the while the thought of the possible profit to be extracted remains steadily at the back of their mind. This can be summed up, perhaps, by saying they are "tip-hunters."

Now the system of tipping is in existence and can't very well be got rid of; that is to say, there are now so many people whose pay or support depends absolutely on the tips they get (waiters in hotels or restaurants, on board ship, porters, lift boys) that to refuse to give them anything would probably reduce them to starvation. Of course, the system is all wrong, for the people who employ them ought to pay them decent Christian wages and render tips unnecessary. Honest public opinion will one day, let us hope, destroy the present meanness of these employers.

However, as things stand, these other poor fellows have got to be tipped, and I can't alter this except by public protest, but what I can do is to discourage others from tipping me. Let me begin by trying to cut out of my mind any expectancy of a tip, any thought of the profit to be got out of anything that is not a mere matter of business or of salary

or definite fee. Let me make a resolution to refuse as degrading any tip for a mere act of politeness or courtesy. Of course, there is no harm in accepting a tip from a relation or older friend when I am a boy at school ; but it is rather the acceptance of tips for favours done that is so lowering to one's true self-esteem ; for the dignity of a really humble follower of Christ will not be degraded easily, but will hold itself freely to the world about it.

TIDINESS

TIDINESS is in many a matter of temperament ; but it can be in all a matter of discipline. That is to say, there are quite a number of boys who seem naturally to be tidy. Their appearance is always neat and clean, their person well-groomed, their hair parted and brushed, their hands well kept, their rooms and bookshelves and chests of drawers all in perfect order. Perhaps this is part of their natural temperament. On the other hand, there are others who seem to be always disarranged and in disorder. Their books and clothes are tossed anyhow about their rooms ; dressing or undressing, packing or unpacking, their whole surroundings are a perfect wilderness of confusion ; their appearance is badly

ordered, with ink-blotted fingers and collars, and with ill-tied ties.

Now this difference between one boy and another may be a matter of temperament; but temperament can be corrected by character. Indeed, the neat boy may owe his neatness more to his mother's training than to any natural gift; she has seen to it that all is well kept. Sometimes, too, it is a matter merely of age, for nearly all boys as they grow older take more trouble over their clothes, choosing well and deliberately their ties and socks and handkerchiefs and suits and hats, and taking care of the things they own; not necessarily being extravagant, but rightly wishing to have nice things; better, they judge, a few well-chosen than a heap of badly fitting and ill-coloured clothes. So of their person, no less than of their clothing, they yearly grow more careful.

Now tidiness or neatness has value to me in so far as it is a matter of keeping things better and making them last longer, or of setting to the best advantage the gifts of body and appearance God has given me, or of disciplining myself to order and arrangement. Self-control is a need for all those who would "live godly in Jesus," and no one but a tidy boy can guess what self-control neatness

demands and teaches. I should ask God to give me some of that wonderful altitude of order whereby He keeps in law and perfect harmony the whole living organism of the world.

ENDURANCE

THIS is the last virtue of all, and for a boy one of the most needed. Our Lord has promised salvation only to those who "persevere unto the end." His parables and His similes from nature are all along the same line of teaching; there must be no trying to serve Him and then giving up and then trying again in fits and starts. I may have failed in many of my resolutions, but I must go on. There should be hard, steady work, and this exactly it is that makes of course the real difficulty in all acts of virtue; for anyone could be good for a day or week or year; but it is the long-drawn-out battle of it that makes goodness so tiresome to get. It is that also, of course, which makes it worth getting.

I SHALL find that anything that is worth my while at all requires hard, steady, untiring energy. A game like ping-pong comes suddenly into fashion and as suddenly dies down just because it is not difficult to get into a

great excellence at it without too much effort. A game at which I can quickly get proficient ceases quickly to have any interest in it. But football, cricket, hockey, tennis, billiards, golf, are all of them of perpetual interest just because though I improve ever so much there remains always a good deal to learn. In other words, the capacity of a game, a hobby, a study to interest me depends on the ratio of endurance and skill that the exercise of it demands. Thus is it also in the good life. We call habits of goodness virtues, for the word virtue by its Latin derivation from *vir* shows the need of manliness, that is, the need of firm endurance.

Now in all my life I shall need endurance, the power of persevering despite every failure, the happy faculty of never giving in. So many boys lose the value and the pleasure of life because they get so easily tired of a thing and have not the power to compel themselves to continue through hours of drudgery. Give them a puzzle to find out, a difficult piece of study, a weight to carry, a knot to untie, a Scout troop or Brigade to attend with regularity; at first they begin with immense energy, then this gradually dwindles down to nothing. What animates them is mere selfish pleasure, and no sense of duty, and they have no understanding of the joy attained when a

fellow has at last after many attempts succeeded in some venture. His very failures give a taste of added pleasure to his ultimate success. Endurance, indeed, is the gift of God who, in His Eternity, endures for ever. May He, through my prayers and sacraments and efforts, lead me home at last. May His Mother be an heroic Mother to me and teach me never to give in. May my angel guardian and my patron saints nerve me to hold on until God calls.

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